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Saudi dissident attacked in UK

A leading Saudi dissident has been stabbed by unknown attackers at his London home during what he said was an attempt by the Saudi authorities to kidnap him.

Saad al-Faqih, head of the London-based Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia and critic of the Saudi royal family, was admitted to hospital on Sunday with a leg wound, a Scotland Yard spokesman said.

Mr al-Faqih told the BBC that two men claiming to be plumbers knocked on his door and then forced their way into his home.

He said he had received recent warnings of a plan to abduct or kill him.

Mohammed al-Masari, a friend of Mr al-Faqih, said the attackers sprayed him with something to make him drowsy.

“As they were going away, they said: ‘take that as a message from the Saudi Government’”

Mohammed al-Masari, dissident's friend

"A fight ensued and Faqih grabbed a table to defend himself and then the two men knifed him," Mr al-Masari told Reuters.

"As they were going away, they said: 'take that as a message from the Saudi Government'."

The injury was not life threatening, police said, confirming that they are investigating an alleged assault.

A spokesman at St Mary's Paddington hospital said Mr al-Faqih was likely to be discharged on Monday.

Mr al-Faqih's group, formed in 1994, has used fax, internet and radio and its new al-Islah TV channel, to circumvent official controls on information and free speech in Saudi Arabia. He advocates peaceful political change.

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